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# Story of Hawthorne

By INEZ N. McFEE



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INSTRUCTOR LITERATURE SERIES

# The Story of Hawthorne

*By Irene N. McFee*



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F. A. OWEN CO., DANVILLE, N. Y.  

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## The Story of Hawthorne

Do you know that delightful book of myths and fairy tales, *The Tanglewood Tales*, a wonder-book for girls and boys? It is all about Pandora's wonderful box, the Gorgon's head, the golden touch of King Midas, Jason's marvelous search for the Golden Fleece, the adventures of Hercules in quest of the Golden Apples, and other delightful classical myths which are nobody knows how old. They are told by Eustace Bright, a young man just home from college, and a very prince of story tellers. His little cousins are never tired of hearing his marvelous tales.

“His stories are good to hear at night,” said little Cowslip, “because we can dream about them asleep; and good in the morning, too, because then we can dream about them awake.”

So you see just how truly delightful they were.

But there was really no such person as Eustace Bright. He was made by the pen of a very clever writer indeed, Mr. Nathaniel Hawthorne. He was himself the clever student just home from college, and he told stories for his own amusement to a purely imaginary group of cousins, whom he called by such odd names as Primrose, Periwinkle, Sweet Fern, Dandelion, Blue Eye, Clover, Huckleberry, Cowslip, Squash-Blossom, Milkweed, Plantain, and Buttercup.

Mr. Hawthorne wrote many other delightful stories for children, some of which were included in *Twice Told Tales*. Among these was the legend of "The Snow Image." It is often in school readers. Perhaps you may have had it in yours. Then, too, there is the dear little story of "Little Daffydowndilly," who fled from the hard master, Toil. Perhaps you know it.

But if we once begin to talk about Mr. Hawthorne's stories, we shall not get to the man himself. And that is what we set out to talk about. His life is as interesting as one of his own tales, and people speak of him as the greatest of American Romancers. So let us begin at the beginning and learn all that we can about him.

### HIS CHILDHOOD

He was born in the historic old town of Salem, Massachusetts, July 4, 1804. His father was a sober, silent man of the sea, "of an athletic and rather slender build," and warm-hearted and kindly and very fond of children. His mother, Elizabeth Clarke Manning, was very beautiful and gifted, with a pure refined mind. Her husband was her world. When he died suddenly, in 1808, at Surinam, of yellow fever, she withdrew entirely from society, and shut herself up like a hermit for the remainder of her long life.

Little Nathaniel was only four years old when the family doors closed to the world. He had a sister Elizabeth, or Ebe as he called her, two years older than himself, and a wonderful new baby sister Louisa of but a few months. So he did not lack for playmates. But



times were often very lonely for the children. They longed to have people visit them and to go about like other folks. They wondered why their mother was so sad and sorrowful, why she always ate her meals alone, and why she often shut herself away from them for hours at a time. But they loved her with all their childish hearts.

Nathaniel, perhaps, had a rather better time than his sisters. Being a boy, "he could go out in the streets, play with other boys, fight with them, make friends with them." (I fancy I hear some little miss saying: "Why did not the girls go too?" Because in those days, my dear, etiquette was rather strict for girls. Only the bravest, or the most negligent of mothers, dared to raise a tomboy.)

Nathaniel is said to have been a bright, handsome little fellow with golden curls, very quick-witted and always able to see the funny side of things. Most of his playmates found him beyond them in knowledge—and in wrestling skill. He knew how to hold his own, and they respected him, curls and all.

Before he could speak plainly, we are told, he used to go about the house repeating certain lines from Shakespeare's *Richard III*, which he had heard some one read. He fitted his own gestures to these and got quite a stage effect. One of the lines was extremely thrilling, especially when fired off all unexpectedly in a dark, gloomy room or passageway. It was:

"Stand back, my lord, and let the coffin pass."

At six years of age the *Pilgrim's Progress* was his favorite book. He loved to go over to his Grandmother

Hawthorne's, and would sit for hours at a time in a corner of the room, by a big window, reading about the fortunes and adventures of Christian, with his pack of sins, his doubting giants, and his long struggle with Apollyon. Greatheart, too, interested him, and the effort of Christiana and her family to join Christian held him breathless, as it has countless of other boys and girls.

Did he understand what he read at such an early age ? I do not know. Neither does any one else ; for it seems no one thought to ask him. They let him browse about among the books and think things out for himself. He had the Bible, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, and Thomson. Small wonder that he fashioned for himself a style of pure simple quaintness and naturalness which won the hearts of all !

He was so much alone that he lived in a world of imagination. It was his delight to invent long stories of wild and fanciful adventures, all about where he was going and what he should do when he grew up. No matter how wild the tale, or how far the scene of its struggles, he would always wind up solemnly with, "And I'm never coming back again !" His sisters said that it made them feel as though they must love and cherish him while he stayed with them. And this they did in full measure. Indeed, the affection which the little family had for each other is too tender to write about. When Hawthorne's mother died, though he was then a middle-aged man and she old and weary with years, his grief was almost too great to be borne.

When about nine years of age little Nathaniel met with an accident which affected all his after life. He was playing ball and in some way lamed his foot. He was put on crutches, and for a time it was thought the trouble did not amount to much. But the foot did not get well. Then his mother saw that it was not growing like the other one. One doctor after another was called in to see the little lame boy, but he was not made well for nearly three years.

He used to lie flat upon the carpet, day after day, and read and study the long hours through. He could not go to school, but his schoolmaster, Joseph Worcester, the man who wrote Worcester's Dictionary, was very kind to him. He came to the house every day and heard his lessons so that he might not fall behind in his classes.

By and by Mrs. Hawthorne took her little flock to a home beside Sebago Lake, in Maine, where the Manning family owned a large tract of land. Here Nathaniel fairly ran wild, fishing all day long, or hunting with an old fowling-piece, as fancy pleased him. Evenings and rainy days were spent over Shakespeare, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and such poetry and other reading as came within his reach. The first book which he bought with his own money was Spencer's *Faerie Queene*. This poem is an account of all the legendary kings of England down to Uther, the father of King Arthur, and is filled with knights and dragons and adventures of various kinds, not the least of them being the tale of how St. George, the Red Cross knight, slew the dragon. It is one of

the greatest poems in the English language, but nevertheless it is difficult reading for a boy of ten years.

But Nathaniel Hawthorne was a rather unusual boy. At the age of sixteen he amused himself by editing a paper which he called *The Spectator*. The first number appeared August 21, 1820, neatly written in printed letters by the editor's own hand. Five numbers more followed. Here are some of the subjects which the young author discussed in his paper: "On Solitude," "The End of the Year," "On Industry," "On Benevolence," "On Autumn," "On Wealth," "On Hope," "On Courage." The last page always contained a poem from the editor's hand, excepting in one instance when "An Address to the Sun" appeared, signed by one of his sisters. In one number he apologizes that no deaths of any importance have taken place in the town. Under the head of Births, he gives the following news, "The lady of Doctor Winthrop Brown, a son and heir. Mrs. Hawthorne's cat, seven kittens. We hear that both of the above ladies are in a state of convalescence." One of the literary advertisements reads:—

"Blank Books made and for sale by N. Hawthorne."

Another states that:—

"Nathaniel Hawthorne proposes to publish by subscription a New Edition of the Miseries of Authors, to which will be added a sequel, containing Facts and Remarks drawn from his own experience."\*

\*"Yesterdays with Authors,"—Fields

## COLLEGE DAYS

When Nathaniel Hawthorne was seventeen, his uncle, Robert Manning, who all along had kept a guardian's eye on him, decided that he should go to college. So he was sent to Bowdoin College, at Brunswick, Maine.

He was a shy country youth, but he soon made his classmates and the professors observe him with interest. His work in Latin aroused Professor Packard to the pitch of enthusiasm. He showed some of the papers to his brother professors, and went about declaring that the lad would one day make his mark in the world. Professor Newman, of the English department was quick to second him. No one could write a better composition than Hawthorne. His style had a certain freshness and finish which was very pleasing. The professor used to carry each one home to read to his family.

On one of his vacations young Hawthorne made a journey into New Hampshire with his uncle, Samuel Manning. They traveled in a two-wheeled chaise and met with a number of adventures, which the young man faithfully set down in his letters home to his mother and sisters. Some of them contained bits of powerful description and spoke in themselves of the good use to which his eyes were put. Others were filled with little flashes of the quiet humor which was so much a part of him. For instance, in writing about "putting up" at Farmington over Sunday, he says:

"As we were wearied with rapid traveling, we found it impossible to attend divine service, which was, of

course, very grievous to us both. In the evening, however, I went to a Bible class, with a very polite and agreeable gentleman, whom I afterwards discovered to be a strolling tailor of very questionable habits.”\*

A halt was made at the little Shaker village of Canterbury. Hawthorne was much pleased with the thrift and peace of the settlement, and spoke to the Shakers about becoming a member of the Society. He wrote home that: “If it were not for the ridiculous ceremonies, a man might do a worse thing than to join them.” Some years afterward he wrote his beautiful story, “The Canterbury Pilgrims.” You may read it in *Twice Told Tales*.

Hawthorne was graduated in the famous class of 1825. Among his classmates were Longfellow, George B. Cheever, and John S. C. Abbott. The two last named studied for the clergy, and made themselves famous in the pulpit and through the books and writings which they published. Franklin Pierce, Hawthorne’s dearest friend, was also a schoolmate at Bowdoin, and graduated the year before him.

### HAWTHORNE AND OLD SALEM

After leaving college Hawthorne buried himself for years in the quiet of his mother’s home, seeing no other society than that of his mother and sisters for months at a time. He spent the day reading all sorts of books and writing wild tales, most of which he destroyed as soon as he had written them. At twilight he would go

\*“Yesterdays with Authors,”—Fields



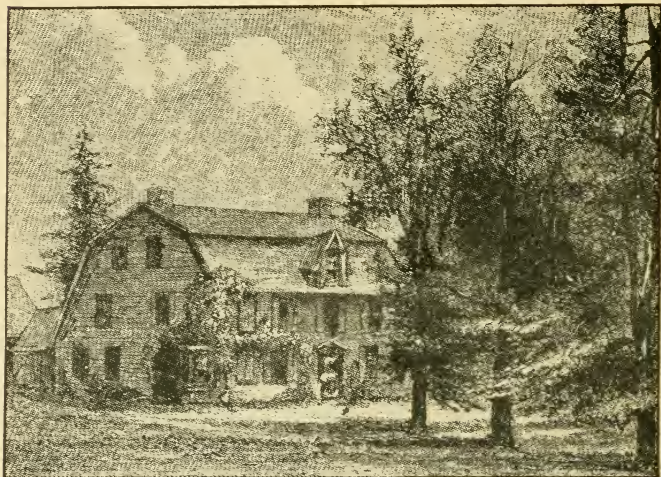
for a solitary ramble through the town or along the seaside.

Old Salem was full of interest and mystery, "with its quaint buildings and quainter customs, with its sailors and their strange superstitious stories, and with its memorable 'Gallows Hill' where the witches were hanged." Here and there were the gloomy mansions of retired whalers and India merchants. Each sheltered one or more ghosts entirely as a matter of course. They pleased Hawthorne's fancy. In *Mosses from an Old Manse* he tells us :

"Houses of any antiquity in New England are so invariably possessed with spirits that the matter seems hardly worth alluding to. Our ghost used to heave deep sighs in a particular corner of the parlor, and sometimes rustled paper, as if he were turning over a sermon, in the long upper entry—where, nevertheless, he was invisible, in spite of the moonshine that fell through the eastern window. Not improbably he wished me to edit and publish a selection from a chest full of manuscript discourses that stood in the garret. Once, while Hillard and other friends sat talking with us in the twilight, there came a rustling noise, as of a minister's silk gown, sweeping through the very midst of the company, so closely as almost to brush against the chairs. Still, there was nothing visible. A yet stranger business was that of a ghostly servant-maid who used to be heard in the kitchen at deepest midnight grinding coffee, cooking, ironing—performing, in short, all kinds of domestic labor, although no traces of anything accomplished could

be detected the next morning. Some neglected duty of her servitude—some ill-starved ministerial band—disturbed the poor damsel in her grave and kept her at work without wages.”

One of Hawthorne's forefathers, a certain Judge Haw-



Old Manse

thorne, in 1691, sentenced several witches to death. The thought of this affected Hawthorne's imagination with a pleasing horror, and he made use of it in *The House of Seven Gables*. He knew, too, of many families like the Pyncheons who had dark blots and misfortunes in their family history, which had so cursed them that they had been driven into poverty and evil ways. Around every corner almost was a story seeking and crying to him to be told. He put many of these on paper, and

read them aloud for the entertainment of his mother and sisters, as they gathered with their knitting, patchwork, and crocheting about the evening lamp.

Imagine, if you please, the young man beginning in a low modest tone the story of "Edward Fane's Rosebud," or "The Seven Vagabonds," or perchance, (O tearful, happy evening!) that tender idyl of "The Gentle Boy!" What a privilege to hear for the first time a "Twice Told Tale," before it was even once told to the public! And I know with what rapture the delighted little audience must have hailed the advent of every fresh indication that genius, so seldom a visitant at any fireside, had come down so noiselessly to bless their quiet hearthstone in the sombre old town.\*

So life went on for twelve years. Most men would have found its slow, even course very tiresome indeed. But Hawthorne enjoyed it. He was busy storing his mind, training his imagination, forming his style, and, in short, getting ready for his splendid literary fame of later years. His first book, *Fanshawe*, a novel, was issued at his own expense, three years after his graduation, in 1828, but it had little success, and copies of the first edition are now very rare. From time to time during his seclusion he sent a sketch or a story to the *Token* and the *Knickerbocker Magazine*; but he signed various names to them, and so, though the articles attracted some little attention, they won no fame for their author, who was then, in his own words, "the obscurest man of letters in America."

\* "Yesterdays with Authors,"—Fields

Mr. Goodrich, the editor of the *Token*, pleased by the character of the work which Hawthorne sent him from time to time, asked the young man to become the editor of the *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*. He accepted with delight, and went to Boston to begin at once. "The magazine was printed on coarse paper," says Fields, "and was illustrated by engravings painful to look at. There were no contributors except the editor, and he wrote the whole of every number."

A big undertaking! But the work must have pleased Hawthorne; for we are told that when the firm broke up, as it soon did, and were unable to pay him the six hundred dollars salary per year as agreed, he kept on without pay. Moreover, he found time to write several stories for the *New England Magazine*, the *Knickerbocker*, and the *Democratic Review*. In 1837, when the *Magazine of Useful Knowledge* had ceased to be, he gathered his magazine stories and had them published in book form under the title of *Twice Told Tales*. People everywhere were delighted with them. The critics thought that Hawthorne had a richer style, and a firmer grasp of the art of fiction, than either Irving or Cooper, the prose-masters of that time. Longfellow wrote him a warm letter of praise, and did all that he could to bring the work before the eye of the public. Edgar Allan Poe, one of the best judges of literary merit of the times, said that Hawthorne might easily take first rank in the field of romance if he would drop allegory.

Now, allegory is a style of writing in which one sub-

ject is described by another resembling it, the idea being to teach a more or less wholesome truth by veiling it in attractive dress. Short allegories are called fables or parables. The *Pilgrim's Progress*, Spencer's *Faerie Queene*, and Swift's *Tale of a Tub* are examples of classic allegory. These had always greatly pleased Hawthorne; hence it is not surprising that he himself should write in allegory. But he used so much of it sometimes as to confuse his reader, and, indeed, himself also. For frequently when a manuscript had grown cold, he could not remember why he had written as he had; he was puzzled to know his own meaning! Thus, in a letter to his publisher, Fields, after revising *Mosses from an Old Manse* for a new edition, he says:

"Upon my honor, I am not quite sure that I entirely comprehend my own meaning in some of these blasted allegories; but I remember that I always had a meaning, or at least thought I had. I am a good deal changed since those times; and, to tell you the truth, my past self is not very much to my taste, as I see myself in this book. Yet, certainly, there is more in it than the public generally gave me credit for at the time it was written."\*

The words show, more than anything else, that Hawthorne understood his own fault and sought to guard against it. But he could never quite follow Poe's advice; he could not give up allegory altogether.

The praise which Hawthorne received for his *Twice Told Tales* was very dear to him. It also induced him

\* "Yesterdays with Authors,"—Fields.



to come shyly out among his fellowmen. His friend, Mr. George Bancroft, the historian, then Collector of the Port of Boston, appointed him weigher and guager in the United States Custom House at Salem. Hawthorne received the office gratefully. To be sure, many of the duties connected with it were distasteful to him, but he knew this would be true of many of the bread-and-butter positions, and he must have the bread and butter. So he put his whole self into the work and soon had the business down to a science. Certainly, no public officer ever better discharged the duties of his office, but it did not help him to keep his job. He was a Democrat. When the Whigs swept everything before them in 1849, they swept out Hawthorne. He then joined Emerson and his followers at Brook Farm. But he was not in sympathy with many of their plans for higher living, and at last, ill and discouraged, he returned to Salem. Here, his friend and publisher, Mr. Fields, found him, one day, in a very desponding mood.

"My dear Hawthorne," said Fields, eagerly, "now is the very time for you to get busy and publish a book. I am sure you must have written something during your spare time."

"Nonsense," answered Hawthorne, with a gloomy shake of his head, "what heart could I have for writing? A large part of the first edition of *Twice Told Tales* remains unsold. I fear it did not please the reading public so well as it did the critics."

"But you might do better next time," argued Fields.

"No," replied Hawthorne, bitterly. "There is no



use. I am already steeped in my own folly. Besides, who would risk publishing a book for me, the most unpopular writer in America?"

"I would," exclaimed Fields, promptly. "I will bring out an edition of two thousand copies of anything you write."

"What madness!" cried Hawthorne, surprised, yet pleased. "Your friendship for me gets the better of your judgment. But I will not listen. I have no money to repay a publisher for his losses."

Fields had little time to argue the matter. He wanted to go back to Boston on the next train, and the hour was at hand. But he begged Hawthorne at least to show him what he had written.

"I have written nothing," muttered the discouraged author, gloomily.

"Now, see here, Hawthorne," exclaimed Fields, severely, determined to make him own up at all costs, "you know you have. Furthermore, it is over there in that closet of drawers this minute!"

This was a mere guess. But Mr. Fields knew that he had hit the nail on the head, from Hawthorne's start of surprise, and the anxious look which he cast toward the desk. But he shook his head, and Mr. Fields, perforce, took his leave, after assuring Hawthorne that he did not intend to leave him in peace, and would come again in a few days.

Before he was half-way down the stairs Hawthorne called to him to wait a moment, and came out into the entry with a roll of manuscript in his hands: "How in

Heaven's name did you know this thing was there? As you have found me out, take what I have written, and tell me, after you get home and have time to read it, if it is good for anything. It is either very good or very bad,—I don't know which."

On his way to Boston the publisher read the germ of *The Scarlet Letter*. The next day he went again to the little house in such an amazing state of excitement that Hawthorne would not believe him really in earnest, and laughed sadly at his enthusiasm. Hawthorne had in mind making *The Scarlet Letter* one of several short stories, and including them under the title of *Old Time Legends*. Fields persuaded him to make *The Scarlet Letter* a book by itself, and left delighted in the thought that his company was to be the agent whereby a masterpiece was to be given to the world.\*

Later events proved the publisher's judgment right. The book came out in 1850. People found it a powerful tale, as vivid in coloring as one would expect from its title. There was a tragic power, a grasp of the passions of human nature, and an insight into the inmost secrets of the heart, which held all spellbound. It was a masterpiece indeed, and carved for its author a place in the foremost ranks of literature of all time. You must read it some day. It has for its background the somber life of the early settlers of New England. This was a field which had always pleased Hawthorne's fancy, and he had several times dipped into it successfully.

\*"Yesterdays with Authors" is authority for the germ of this story.

You may satisfy yourself of this fact by reading "Endicott and the Red Cross," "Legends of the Province House," and other selections from *Twice Told Tales*.

The author got himself into a peck of trouble, and made a host of enemies, by sketching in the preface to *The Scarlet Letter* some of the government officials who had been his comrades at the Custom House. Those not gored by the ox were intensely amused by his fine quiet humor, and said that it rivaled Irving's in satiric quality and richness. Hawthorne used it merely as a relief to the shadows of the story—"an entrance hall to the magnificent edifice which he threw open to his guests." He expressed to Fields a feeling that: "It would be funny if, seeing the further passages so dark and dismal, they should all choose to stop there!"

### HAWTHORNE'S MARRIAGE

We have been so interested in telling you of Hawthorne's rise to fame that we have found no place to record the most important event of his life,—his marriage to Miss Sophia Peabody, July 9, 1842. His friend says that he never would have risen to the place which he did without her help. His son Julian, in his story of *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, says: "To explain and describe his career without taking his marriage to Sophia Peabody into consideration would be like trying to imagine a sun without heat, or a day without sun. Nothing seems less likely than that he would have accomplished his work in literature independently of her sympathy and companionship."

Did she aid him in the composition of his books and stories? No. Such a thought never entered her dainty head, wise and gifted though it was. She read Latin, Greek and Hebrew; she knew history, and could do excellent work in drawing, painting and sculpture. She was also ready with her pen, as all her letters prove. But she had no idea of making a career for herself. She lived only for her husband. To plan the day so that he might be saved from trouble and interruption, to cheer and encourage him so that his divine inspiration might have full sway, this was her work, and it was a labor of love. "Her husband appreciated her, but she had no appreciation of herself. She only felt what a privilege it was to love and minister to such a man, and to be loved by him. \* \* \* What she gave, he returned; she never touched him without a response; she never called to him without an echo. \* \* \* His wife always remained to him a sort of mystery of goodness and helpfulness."

Some day you must read Hawthorne's beautiful love letters. They are printed in the book *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*. In one he tells Sophie: "Nothing like our story was ever written, or ever will be; but if it could be told, methinks it would be such as the angels might take delight to hear." Again he writes: "You are a sort of sweet, simple, gay, pathetic ballad, which Nature is singing, sometimes with tears, sometimes with smiles, and sometimes with intermingled smiles and tears." And in still another we read: "I have met with an immense misfortune. Do you sympathize from

the bottom of your heart? Would you take it upon yourself, if possible? Yes, I know you would, even without asking the nature of it; and, truth to tell, I would be selfish enough to wish that you might share it with me. Now art thou all in a fever of anxiety? Shall I tell thee? No—yes; I will. I have received an invitation to a party at General McNiel's next Friday evening. Why will not people let poor persecuted me alone? What possible good can it do for me to thrust my coal-begrimed visage and salt-befrosted locks into good society? What claim have I to be there,—a humble measurer, a subordinate Custom House officer, as I am? I cannot go; I will not go. I intend to pass that evening with you,—that is, in musing and dreaming of you; and, moreover, considering that we love each other, methinks it is an exceeding breach of etiquette that you were not invited! How strange it is, tender and fragile little Sophie, that your protection should have become absolutely necessary to such a great, rough, burly, broad-shouldered personage as I! I need your support as much as you need mine."

When Hawthorne first met Miss Peabody she was an invalid, and there seemed no hope that she would ever be strong enough to marry. But he had great faith in Love as a physician. In one of his letters we read: "Oh, my dearest, do let our love be powerful enough to make you well. I have faith that it shall make you so well at heart that you cannot possibly be ill in the body. Partake of my health and strength, my beloved. Are they not your own, as well as mine?"

Miss Peabody believed this also with all her soul. She had faith, too, in a higher power. "If God intends us to marry," she told her handsome lover, "He will let me be cured; if not, it will be a sign that it is not best."

But it was to be best. How could it be otherwise when all of Hawthorne's spirit called to his sweetheart? "Whenever I return to Salem, I feel how dark my life would be without the light that you shed upon it,—how cold, without the warmth of your love. Sitting in this chamber, where my youth wasted itself in vain, I can partly estimate the change that has been wrought. It seems as if the better part of me had been born since then. I had walked those many years in darkness, and might so have walked through life, with only a dreamy notion that there was any light in the universe, if you had not kissed my eyelids and given me to see. You, dearest, have always been positively happy. Not so, I—I have only been miserable. Then which of us had gained the most? I, assuredly! When a beam of heavenly sunshine incorporates itself with a dark cloud, is not the cloud benefited more than the sunshine? Nothing at all has happened to me since I left you. It puzzles me to conceive how you meet with so many more events than I. You will have a volume to tell me, when we meet, and you will pour your beloved voice into my ears in a long stream; at length you will pause and say, 'But what has your life been?' and then will stupid I look back upon what I call my life, for three or four days past, and behold a blank! You live ten times as



much as I, because your spirit takes so much more note of things.

“I am enduring my banishment here as best I may; methinks all enormous sinners should be sent on a pilgrimage to Salem, and compelled to spend a length of time there, proportioned to the enormity of their offences. Such punishment would be suited to crimes that do not quite deserve hanging, yet are too aggravated for the State’s Prison. Oh, naughty I! If it be a punishment, I deserve to suffer a life-long infliction of it, were it only for slandering my native town so vilely! But any place is strange and lonesome to me where you are not; and where you are, any place will be home. I ought to love Salem better than I do; for the people have always had a pretty generous faith in me, ever since they knew me at all. I fear I must be undeserving of their praise, else I should never get it. What an ungrateful blockhead am I!”\*

Hawthorne was thirty-eight and his wife thirty-two years old when they married. They began housekeeping in the “Old Manse” at Concord. They had the Emersons, the Alcotts, Ellery Channing and his beautiful young wife, Margaret Fuller, and David Thoreau as neighbors. Here they spent three delightful years. We get glimpses of them in Hawthorne’s *Note Books*, in *Mosses from an Old Manse*, and in Julian Hawthorne’s delightful record of his father and mother. Both Mr. and Mrs. Hawthorne kept a journal in which they wrote the little happenings of their daily life and such thoughts and fancies as pleased them.

\*“Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife.”

In Hawthorne's journal we read: "Methinks my little wife is twin sister to the spring; so they should greet one another tenderly,—for they are both fresh and dewy, both full of hope and cheerfulness; both have bird-voices, always singing out their hearts; both are sometimes overcast with flitting mists, which only make the flowers bloom brighter; and both have power to renew and recreate the weary spirit. I have married the Spring! I am husband to the month of May!"

Mrs. Hawthorne's letters to her mother also contain many delightful glimpses of the life. Her son Julian calls them "A History of Happiness." Here is a lovely little picture from one written April 20, 1843. "Sunday afternoon the birds were sweetly mad, and the lovely rage of song drove them hither and thither, and swelled their breasts amain. It was nothing less than a tornado of fine music. I kept saying, 'Yes, yes, yes, I know, dear little maniacs! I know there never was such an air, such a day, such a sky, such a God! I know it,—I know it!' But they would not be pacified. Their throats must have been made of fine gold, or they would have been rent by such rapture quakes."

Another letter shows that Mr. Hawthorne was not to be won entirely from his hermit habits, and that his wise little wife was more than content that it should be so: "Mr. Hawthorne's abomination of visiting still holds strong, be it to see no matter what angel. But he is very hospitable, and receives strangers with great loveliness and graciousness. Mr. Emerson says his way is regal, like a prince or general, even when at

table he hands the bread. Elizabeth Hoar remarked that though his shyness was very evident, yet she liked his manner, because he always faced the occasion like a man, when it came to the point. Of what moment will it be, a thousand years hence, whether he saw this or that person? If he had the gift of speech like some others—Mr. Emerson, for instance—it would be different, but he was not born to mix in general society. \* \* \*

“He loves power as little as any mortal I ever knew; and it is never a question of private will between us, but of absolute right. \* \* \* His will is strong, but not to govern others. He is so simple, so just, so tender, that my highest instinct could only correspond with his will. I never knew such delicacy of nature. \* \* \* Was ever such a union of power and gentleness, softness and spirit, passion and reason? I think it must be partly smiles of angels that make the air and light so pleasant here. My dearest Love waits upon God like a child.”\*

Hawthorne's first child, Una, was born in the “Old Manse,” March 1, 1844. She was a lovely little baby, and you will like to read some time the dear little things which Mamma Sophia wrote to her own adored mother. Here is a sample: “She smiles and smiles and smiles, and makes grave remarks in a dovelike voice. Her lashes are longer every morning, and bid fair to be, as Cornelia said Mr. Hawthorne's were, ‘a mile long and curled up at the end.’ Her mouth is sweetly curved,

\*“Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife.”

and, as Mary the cook prettily says, 'it has so many lovely stirs in it.' "

When Una was two years old baby Julian was added to the household. He was born in Boston, where the family spent the summer and autumn. They returned finally to Salem and the house in Mall Street where *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Snow Image*, *The Great Stone Face*, etc., were written. Hawthorne's journal at this time is filled with the sayings and doings of little Julian and Una. For their nursery was his study these days and he was the nurse-maid, while his wife stayed most of the time in an upstairs room, looking after his mother, Madame Hawthorne, who was ill unto death and suffering greatly. It was a time of great stress and poverty. Hawthorne had lost his work at the Custom House, and the family were dependent entirely upon his pen—a poor staff in those days of poorly paid authors, brilliant and flowing with ready grace though it was.

But "behind the clouds is the sun still shining." Grandma went "home to God," and perhaps she made special pleading for Nathaniel and his dear wife. At any rate the affairs of the Hawthornes began to mend. A check for one hundred dollars came from the publishers of a certain magazine who had used a number of Hawthorne's stories; his friend, George Hillard, knowing something of his struggles, circulated a subscription in his behalf and collected quite a sum of money which he sent to him with a warm letter entreating him not to give up heart; and Fields, the publisher, came down upon him to get a book manuscript. John Greenleaf

Whittier, too, wrote him a hearty letter from Amesbury, and enclosed a check for "thy admirable story in the *Era*," a magazine with which he (Whittier) was connected.

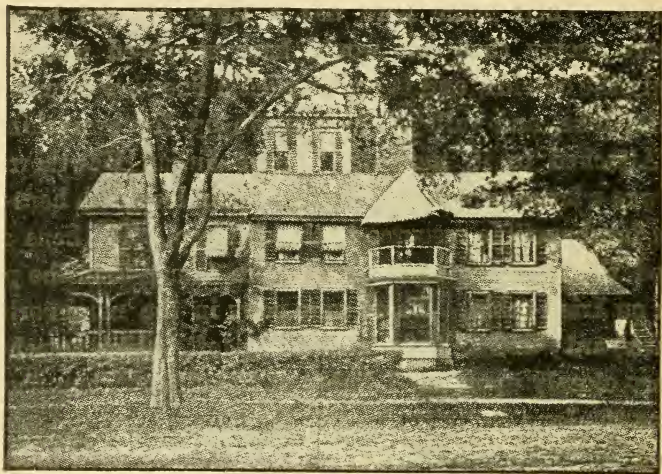
With the appearance of *The Scarlet Letter* and fame, poverty lost its firm hold upon the little family. They slipped away to Lennox, in the Berkshire Hills, to recover. Their home here was a little old red house, more roomy than one would have supposed who saw only the outside, and it commanded a fine view of mountain, lake, and valley, which made up for everything. "Attached to it, moreover," says Julian Hawthorne, "was a large two-storied hencoop, populous with hens—an inexhaustible resource to the children. The hens all had their proper names, and were tamer than the pig in an Irish cabin. There were cows in the neighboring farmyard; and a barn with a hay-loft, which trenched very closely upon the delights of Paradise. Then, there was the long declivity toward Tanglewood and the lake; and in winter Hawthorne and the children used to seat themselves one behind another upon the big sled, and go down in headlong career through the snow-drifts,—as is related, in the *Wonder Book*, of Eustace Bright and his little people. Even the incident of the stump hidden beneath the snow actually happened, precisely as set down in the book, as well as many other humorous and delightful episodes."

Here Hawthorne wrote *The House of Seven Gables*. And here, too, Rose, the third and last child was born. Concerning her, the father wrote to his sister Louisa:



“The baby flourishes, and seems to be the brightest and strongest baby we have had. She grows prettier, but cannot be called absolutely beautiful. Her hair, I think, is a more decided red than Una’s.”

Then Mr. Hawthorne bought “The Wayside,” the old home of the Alcotts. It was a lovely place, on the edge



The Wayside

of Sleepy Hollow, about two miles from the old “Manse” where the Hawthornes had been so happy, and here they settled down to enjoy life in a neighborhood already hallowed by pleasant association. In the midst of their joy came the terrible news of the loss of Mr. Hawthorne’s sister Louisa, in the burning of the ship “Henry Clay,” on the Hudson. She jumped into the water, preferring to be drowned rather than to be burned. Her body was washed ashore some days later. It was



a cruel blow to the Hawthornes; all the more so because they had made great plans for her to give them a long visit, and perhaps to make her home with them henceforward.

Hawthorne roused from his sorrow to write his delightful book *Tanglewood Tales*, containing the six myths, the Minotaur, the Golden Fleece, the Pygmies, the Dragon's Teeth, Circe's Palace, and the Pomegranate Seed. I hope you have read them all.

His next work was a labor of love. It was the writing of the *Life of Franklin Pierce*. The two had been the warmest friends since their college days. Pierce was now about to enter the race for the presidency, and Hawthorne was glad to do what he could to help him. He knew, of course, that people would say that he did it for the reward of an office later. But he did not care what people thought so long as he knew that his own motives were pure. He wrote the book very carefully and painstakingly, putting in not a word, according to his wife, "which he did not know to be true in spirit and in letter." Pierce's enemies called the work Hawthorne's "New Romance," and were loud in "I told you so!" when President Pierce appointed him United States Consul to Liverpool.

The Hawthornes sailed for England in the latter part of June, 1853. They had longed for a tour abroad for years, and the trip promised vistas of delight. The four years in Liverpool, with little journeys here and there over the kingdom, were joyous and happy, and Mr. Hawthorne made an ideal consul. But we have

not space to tell about it here. Then followed three years on the continent, most of which were spent in Italy. During this time Hawthorne was gathering material for his great allegory, *The Marble Faun*. It was published in 1860, and the Hawthornes returned to "The Wayside." Here Mr. Hawthorne busied himself in improving the place, and in writing essays and stories for the magazines, and two or three book manuscripts.

His health was much broken, and he was not able to confine himself to anything long. He died suddenly, at Plymouth, New Hampshire, May 18, 1864, while traveling with his friend, Ex-president Pierce. He was buried in the Concord cemetery, near where Emerson and Thoreau now rest. Longfellow, Whittier, Emerson, and Lowell attended the funeral. His publisher, Mr. Fields, also was present, and wrote: "We carried him through the blossoming orchards of Concord, and laid him down in a group of pines on the hillside, the unfinished romance which had cost him such anxiety laid upon his coffin." Longfellow was much touched by the funeral service and the sight of the unfinished manuscript upon which his friend had spent so much time. On his return home he wrote an exquisite poem describing the scene, and referring in the closing lines to the uncompleted romance:

Ah, who shall lift that wand of magic power,  
And the lost clue regain?  
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower  
Unfinished must remain.

Mrs. Hawthorne died seven years later in London. She sleeps in the Kensal Green cemetery. By her side lies Una, the dearly loved daughter, who followed her within six years. Rose married the publisher, G. P. Lathrop and, like her brother Julian, is a well-known writer. The Hawthorne lot in the Sleepy Hollow cemetery is outlined by a hedge of arbor vitae. A simple headstone with the one word "Hawthorne" marks his grave. Beside him rest his two grandchildren, Gladys Hawthorne and Francis Hawthorne Lathrop.

The story is told that when Hawthorne was a young man in college, an old gypsy chanced one day to meet him in the lane. She put her hand above her eyes and queried hastily, "Are you a man or an angel?" All his life Hawthorne was singularly handsome. He had a strong physical frame and a tall stature. He had broad shoulders, a deep chest, and a massive head. His gray-blue eyes were large and lustrous. His hair was dark brown, and of remarkable fineness; his skin delicate, giving unusual softness to his complexion.

His son Julian tells us that: "He was a tireless walker, and of great bodily activity; up to the time he was forty years old, he could clear a height of five feet at a standing jump. His voice, which was low and deep in ordinary conversation, had astounding volume when he chose to give full vent to it; with such a voice, and such eyes and presence, he might have quelled a crew of mutinous privateersmen at least as effectively as Bold Daniel, his grandfather: it was not a bellow, but had the searching and electrifying quality of the blast of a

trumpet." Hawthorne had a rather roving disposition. He never liked to stop long in one place. He laughingly said that it was a heritage from this same Bold Daniel, who was a peer among seamen.

### WHAT OTHERS THOUGHT OF HAWTHORNE

"His style is as clear as the running waters are."  
—*Longfellow*

"There is Hawthorne, with genius so shrinking and rare  
That you hardly at first see the strength that is there;  
A frame so robust, with a nature so sweet,  
So earnest, so graceful, so lithe, and so fleet,  
Is worth a descent from Olympus to meet."

—*Lowell: "A Fable for Critics"*

"In Hawthorne's books, to be sure, are the profoundest sin, the deepest veil of misery and mystery, the infinite gloom of which Mrs. Hawthorne wrote; but always above them the tremendous truth written with characters of fire, and yet 'with divine touches of beauty,' with many a picture of artlessly lovely nature and life, and with the tender spirit of a child pervading the whole." —*Richardson*

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